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THE

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SERMON FROM JONAH II. 8.

BY JOSEPH PETTEE.

"They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy."

To obtain mercy, or, as it is expressed in a passage of Scripture, to be compassed about by mercy, is a very great good; and consequently to forsake mercy, to be prevented from obtaining it, to fail to be compassed about by it, is a correspondingly great evil. Consequently, the observing of lying vanities — a work which leads away from mercy — ought especially and most carefully to be avoided.

In order to obtain assistance in avoiding lying vanities, which separate us from mercy, let us, in the first place, go to the Scriptures to learn what such vanities are, and then make such useful practical application of the subject as we are able.

The proper way of interpreting the language of the Bible is to explain it by itself, — to show the meaning of a word or passage which, in one place, is obscure, by the same word, or a similar passage, in places where the meaning is clear. Thus, here there is nothing said which shows the precise meaning of vanities. But in other places the word is used in a connection which makes plain the idea which it represents. There are passages from which it appears that the primary Scripture idea of *vanities* is that of *false gods*, — the gods of idolatry. Thus,

in the prophecy of Jeremiah: "*Every man is brutish in his knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for the molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are* VANITY, *and the work of errors.*" (x. 14, 15.) Again, in the same prophet: "*Are there any among the* VANITIES *of the Gentiles that can cause rain? . . . Art not thou He, O Jehovah, our God?* (xiv. 22.) The manifest meaning of the first question, in connection with the last, is, Are there any of the *gods* of the Gentiles that can cause rain? Thus their *gods* are *vanities.* In the Psalms it is said, "*For Jehovah is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols* [or VANITIES]; *but Jehovah made the heavens.*" (xcvi. 4, 5.) Here the word that is rendered "idols" might properly be rendered "vanities;" for that is its primitive meaning; and it is applied to the gods of the nations as being *vanity,* or *nothing worth.*

But what is said of the idols of the heathen, in comparison with the true God, shows why they are vanity. They are vanity because they are utterly destitute of any of the attributes or capacities of God. Thus, in the Psalms, "*But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he pleased. The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: they have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: they have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.*" (cxxxv. 3–7.) The same idea is brought to view in the prophet Jeremiah. "*Silver, spread into plates, is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder. Blue and purple is their clothing: they are all the work of cunning men. But Jehovah is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens.*" (x. 9–11.)

Thus we see that the primary idea of *vanities* is that of *heathen deities;* and we see, also, why that term is appropriate to them.

But there is another idea of vanities which is in perfect agreement with this, — which flows from it, and which is also distinctly brought to view in the Scriptures. Indeed, *idols* do not mean mere *heathen gods.* There is something which even professed Christians may worship, which is as really meant in the Scriptures by *idols,* and is as properly *vanity,* as are the gods of the heathen.

In regard to the construction of an idol, we read as follows: "*For the customs of the people are* VAIN; *for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm-tree, but they speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go.*" (Jeremiah x. 3–5.) This is the *idol,* — the *stock:* what more than a literal stock does it import? The further idea which it involves is directly presented. It is declared what the stock is. "*But they are altogether brutish and foolish:* THE STOCK IS A DOCTRINE OF VANITIES" (ver. 8). A *stock,* then, means not merely *an idolatrous graven image:* it means also a *false, worthless, unsound, imaginary doctrine.* There is a similar difference between the genuine truth of the Scriptures, and false doctrine derived from them, — between the truth which the Lord speaks, and which they who humbly tremble at his Word, hear, and the things which they who falsify it, teach; — there is a similar difference between these as between the true God and a false god; as between the Lord and an idol. We have an example of the import of a *stock* as *the doctrine of vanity* in that of the devil, when he tempted the Lord to *cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple,* by declaring from the Scriptures, "*He shall give his angels charge concerning thee to keep thee.*" He drew a doctrine from the Scripture, or he perverted the Scripture to confirm a doctrine devised for his own evil end. All false doctrine drawn from or confirmed by the Scripture, — all doctrine framed for such an object, — is a *stock, doctrine*

of vanity. It is doctrine of vanity for the same reason that an idol is vanity; because it has none of the attributes and capacities of doctrine of divine truth. The genuine doctrine of the Bible, — the doctrine of divine truth; the doctrine of those who search the Scriptures with humble reverence; who avoid perverting them, and receive implicitly what they teach, — this doctrine is exceedingly powerful. It is said, "*By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*" (Psalm xxxiii. 6.) Thus we see how powerful the word of the Lord is, in the natural sense. By it were the sun, the moon, and the stars, and also the earth, brought into existence; and by it they perpetually subsist. But there is a perfectly corresponding efficiency in the divine truth of the Scriptures, in the minds of those who receive it. It actually creates them anew. It forms them into the divine image and likeness.

The great power of the divine truth, — of the genuine doctrine which contains it, is often brought to view in the Bible. Thus, in the prophecy of Jeremiah, where the dreams of the prophets who prophesy lies in the name of the Lord are spoken of, it is said, "*The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith Jehovah. Is not my word as a fire, and as a hammer, that breaketh the rock in pieces?*" (xxiii. 28, 29.) The power of the genuine truth of the Word of the Lord is here compared to that of fire and the hammer which break a rock in pieces. And the comparison shows that it can accomplish the most difficult of all things. Once received, given heed to, applied in its own wise way, it can subdue the greatest evils. It can take the stony heart out of the flesh, and give a heart of flesh. It can accomplish that work, at the difficulty of which the disciples were exceedingly amazed, when the Lord said to them, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (Matthew xix. 24.) It can remove the love of riches from the supreme place in the mind, and give it a subordinate place.

The inefficacy of the *dreams* of those *who prophesy lies,* — of

those *who use their own tongues, and say, He saith;* that is, who teach false doctrine from the Scriptures, — is also brought to view in this passage. *"What is the chaff to the wheat?"* The dreams of those who prophesy lies, — the doctrine of the teachers who declare what is false in the name of the Lord, is chaff. It has the appearance of wheat, and of possessing what can afford nourishment; but it can no more sustain spiritual life in the soul than chaff can support the life of the body.

The vanity, emptiness, and powerlessness of the false doctrine which men devise and confirm by a perversion of the Bible, as compared with its true doctrine, is strikingly brought to view in this passage of the prophet Isaiah: *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."* (lv. 8–11.)

Here we see that the effect of the Word of the Lord upon those who receive its truth without perversion, and faithfully observe it, corresponds with the effect of the rain upon the earth, — causing it to bring forth and bud; to give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; and that, in producing these effects, the doctrine of divine truth is as much superior in excellence and in power, as much higher than any of the thoughts or doctrines devised by men, as heaven is higher than the earth. *"Are there any of the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain?"* All the vanities of man-devised doctrines are utterly incapable of producing effects in the mind which correspond to those of the rain upon the earth. Thus we see, from the Scriptures, not only that vanities signify false doctrines, but that such doctrines are vanities because they are of no value, are utterly empty, and of no efficiency for the ends for which doctrines are designed.

The "*vanities*" mentioned in the text are called "*lying vanities.*" What are LYING *vanities?*

A *vanity* is an unsound, false, worthless sentiment or doctrine given as the truth of the Bible. Now, is it not a falsehood — is it not a most fearful, a most aggravated falsehood — to commend to men, whose souls *live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,* — to commend to them, as the truth of God, that which is not his truth? Is it not telling a most pernicious lie to men, to give them, as the doctrine of the Bible, what the Lord hath not spoken? And not only do they tell a lie who cunningly deduce what is false from the Bible; but the doctrine itself, as it were, tells a lie, inasmuch as it professes to be true. Thus it appears that false doctrines are "LYING *vanities.*"

Let us next proceed to illustrate the subject by an example of a lying vanity, — a false doctrine which has been deduced from the Scriptures; and of which those who would avoid forsaking their own mercy need now to beware. The false doctrine alluded to is this: *that men, since the fall, must not expect to be saved by conformity of life to the precepts of the Decalogue; but by the imputation to them of the merit of the Lord, who perfectly fulfilled those precepts.*

Nothing can be plainer to those who attentively examine the Scriptures from an honest heart, than that this is a doctrine of vanity; than that it is a lying vanity. The Lord says, "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.*" (Matthew v. 17, 18.) That this means that the Lord did not come to discontinue the necessity and the obligation, on the part of man, of obedience to the law and the prophets, we can see from what he immediately adds: "*Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*" From this it plainly appears, that nothing else disqualifies a man so much for a place in the Lord's king-

dom, as breaking the divine law, and leading others to do it; and that nothing so effectually qualifies a man to be in his kingdom, as keeping, and leading others to keep, that law. From what the Lord says next, we can see that so far was he from discontinuing the obligation of obedience to the commandments as the way of life, that he actually opened them more fully; showed more their breadth and height; and thus increased, instead of diminishing, our obligations. He adds, "*For I say unto you, Except your righteousness shall* EXCEED *the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" What he means by a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees, we can see clearly illustrated in what he proceeds to say. It is this: "*Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that whosoever is* ANGRY *with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment,*" &c. Here, and in similar contrasts which follow, are the lesser righteousness and the greater, — the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and that of the Lord's kingdom which exceeds theirs. The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees is what was said by them of old time, according to the mere letter. According to this righteousness, men must avoid the *act* of murder, the *act* of adultery and of false testimony. They must love a neighbor, and hate an enemy. But according to the Lord's righteousness, which greatly exceeded this, they must avoid *anger* and *hatred*, must avoid *impurity of thought and feeling*, and must *love their enemies*. Thus, instead of relaxing at all the requirements of the divine law, the Lord, in effect, made them much greater by showing more fully the great breadth of their meaning, and by showing that they extend to the thoughts, intentions, and affections, as well as the actions.

Thus it appears, as in clear daylight, from the teachings of the Lord, to which we have been attending, that it is an entirely unscriptural doctrine, that we are not to be saved by conformity of life to the commandments.

But it is said, — and this is another vanity by which the

other is confirmed, — that the possibility of our being saved by the observance of the divine law is destroyed by the acknowledged fact that we have sinned; and that there can be no hope of salvation by obedience, if there is any, even the least, defect in it.

This notion is contrary not only to enlightened reason, and the whole spirit of the Scriptures, but also most pointedly contrary to the letter. Hear what they say as touching this point: "*If* THE WICKED *will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die.* ALL HIS TRANSGRESSIONS THAT HE HATH COMMITTED, THEY SHALL NOT BE MENTIONED UNTO HIM: *in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.*" Who shall dare to say, in opposition to this divine declaration, that the past sins of a truly penitent man — a man whose life is sincerely reformed — prevent his salvation? "*All the transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him.*" He shall not be accused of them; he shall not be condemned for them: in the righteousness to which he has turned, and which, according to his ability, he sincerely and humbly practises, he shall live. But it is not left even here. The Lord, as it were, tenderly protests against the thought that he can have any pleasure in the death of the wicked, and in his not living, by turning from his evil way. "*Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith Jehovah God; and not that he should return from his ways, and live?*" (Ezekiel xviii. 21–23.)

But the Scriptures do not leave this subject even with the idea of an overlooking on the part of the Lord, which might appear reluctant of the transgressions of those who sincerely turn from their evil ways. We are taught in the New Testament, by repeated illustrations, that there is a peculiar *joy in heaven over the sinner that repenteth.* (See Luke xv. 1–10.) And what was the case with the returning prodigal? When, having returned to his father, he confessed, "*Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son,*" (Luke xv. 21,) his father did not indeed mention his transgressions unto him; but was there

nothing *more positive* than this? "*He said to his servant, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found.*" (Luke xv. 22–24.) Thus we, in some measure, see how infinitely far it is from the truth of the Scriptures, that the sins of those who sincerely repent, and return from their evil ways, stand in the way of their salvation.

The doctrine, then, *that men, since the fall, must not expect to be saved by conformity of life to the divine precepts, but by the imputation to them of the merit of the Lord,* — this doctrine is a lying vanity.

The text speaks of those who OBSERVE *lying vanities.* To observe them is to give heed to them; to regard them as of authority; and to be led, guided in life, by them. To observe, for example, the lying vanity we have been considering, would be to regard it as doctrine of truth; and to make efforts to do what it points out as necessary to acceptance with God: that is, make efforts to secure the imputation to one's self of the merit of the Lord.

"*They that observe lying vanities* FORSAKE THEIR OWN MERCY."

Mercy may be considered under two aspects; that is, in regard to him who exercises it; and in respect to those who receive the benefits of it. Mercy, in him who shows it, is sympathy with those who need aid; and a disposition to bestow it. Mercy, in respect to the recipients, is the good which there is in the aid extended to them. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. Their own mercy is the good which they would be enriched with by the mercy of the Lord, if their course of conduct in observing false doctrine did not deprive them of it. But what is the aid which the Lord's mercy desires to extend to them? By seeing this, we shall be able to understand how being led by false doctrine deprives them of it. What the Lord's merciful feelings towards men prompt him to impart to them, we can see clearly from things which have been already brought to our notice. His mercy

wills, then, that they should have *a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees;* that they should observe the commandments not only outwardly, but also in their minds; not only not *kill*, and *commit adultery*, but not cherish anger, contempt, hatred, or impurity; and not only *love the neighbor*, — a friend, — but also *love their enemies, do good to those that hate them, and pray for those who despitefully use and persecute them.* The good which the Lord desires to impart to men is, that they should not *break*, and lead others to break, these laws; but should *keep*, and lead others to keep, them.

Again, the mercy of the Lord prompts him to desire that the wicked, those who have sinned, — and "*there is no man that sinneth not*," (1 Kings viii. 46,) — should turn from the sins they have committed, and live and not die, by doing that which is lawful and right. It is the nature of the Lord's mercy to will this for men. He desires for them the good that there is in doing this; and it is in doing it that they find their mercy; and they cannot find their mercy without doing this; and, if they are led away from this, they are led away from their mercy.

The good which the Lord's mercy wills for men who have gone astray, is, that they should come to themselves; should, of their own free will, determine to *arise and go to their Father, and to say unto him, Father, we have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and are not worthy to be called thy sons.* And it is in doing this, and only in doing this, that they can find their mercy; and, if they are prevented from doing this, they fail of the good which the Lord wills they should have.

Now, this is the inexpressibly great mischief which observing the lying vanity we have been endeavoring to expose, inflicts upon those who are persuaded that it is a truth of the church. Instead of seeking their mercy by faithful endeavors, as of themselves, but looking to the Lord for strength, to do the righteousness which he teaches; instead of seeking their mercy by shunning, as against God, the sins they have committed, keeping his statutes, and doing that which is lawful and right, they go about seeking

to have the merit of the Lord imputed to them, — which thing is utterly impossible, and can never be; and thus they forsake their own mercy: by observing a lying vanity, they are deprived of the great good which the Lord would give them.

In conclusion, it should be observed that the text is a portion of the prayer of Jonah in the belly of the great fish; and consequently, as Jonah, in that situation, represents the Lord while enduring the conflicts of temptation which he experienced in the performance of his work in the world, it brings to view the sympathy of the Lord in the unhappy condition of those who are led astray by lying vanities. The words of the text express the pity that he felt for such. It was a great grief to him that they should suffer such a calamity; that, by false doctrine, they should be defrauded of the mercy which the observance of the truth would have given them. And as the condition of such called forth the sympathy of the Lord, it should call forth ours. We should, in our hearts, pity them. And as he was prompted by his mercy to do what was necessary, in order to bring aid to such as were well-disposed, but misled by false doctrine, so we should do what is in our power to give aid to them also; and if, by showing the falsity of a lying vanity, which leads them away from mercy, and at the same time showing a truth that leads to mercy, we help them in any degree into the way of peace, in our humble measure we co-operate with the Lord.

COMPARATIVE MORAL INFLUENCE OF THE ORTHODOX AND UNITARIAN VIEWS OF THE BIBLE.

Under this title, a recent number of the "Christian Register" contains an article setting forth what the writer regards as the views of the Orthodox and Unitarian denominations on the subject of the inspiration of the Sacred Scripture, and comparing the moral influence of the two. We know not

how far he is authorized to speak for either sect; but, as the article is published without comment, we conclude that the editor of the "Register" regards it as a fair representation of the views of the Unitarians. We think, however, that there are a considerable number, who are classed with this denomination, who would hardly assent to these views; and the writer has given the Orthodox credit for greater reverence for the Word than we had supposed generally existed among them.

In the light of the New Church, the picture given of the Orthodox faith on this subject must be preferred decidedly to that of the Unitarian. With them, the reverence for the Scriptures is represented as blind, and they appear to be worshipping they know not what; but, in the description of Unitarianism, the blindness seems to have been removed, not by coming to Him who is ever able and willing to restore sight to those who humbly ask it, and seek to do his will, but by eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in consequence of which the eyes have been opened. There can be no reverence for the Word so blind as not to be far preferable to a denial of its divine authority.

We presume that Orthodoxy, so far as regards the subject of inspiration, is, to a considerable extent, simply undeveloped Unitarianism. The principles of interpretation are essentially the same, and both denominations seem tending to the same result; but the Unitarians have made the greater progress. But, if the Orthodox are restrained from throwing off the authority of the Sacred Scripture merely by a salutary fear, it is better than nothing; and we feel more respect for the faith which maintains a feeble existence, in spite of the apparent contradictions and inconsistencies in which it is involved, than for that reason which rejects these contradictions and inconsistencies, and, with them, the faith without which it is spiritually dead, having no connection with Him who is the fountain of all true rationality.

As the Unitarian views of the inspiration of the Scriptures are here presented to us, every man is left at liberty to receive or reject any part of the Bible according as it commends itself or not

to his own understanding; and the objection is admitted, "in its full force," that "the doctrines and precepts derived from it will be various as the minds of men." Human reason is made the supreme judge and arbiter; having usurped the throne of the "Word which was in the beginning with God, and which was God." With such views, we are totally unable to understand in what essential point the Sacred Scripture is supposed to differ from other books, or wherein its inspiration is thought to consist. There is a degree of profanity in comparing the Word of God to an Egyptian idol, hollow, and filled with rats, which we have rarely seen equalled; and it is sad to think that such sentiments should be allowed to constitute a portion of the *religious* reading of a very respectable part of the community. We cannot but hope that they will not meet with a favorable response. We trust there are many who would be shocked by such views; but we know of nothing in Unitarianism by which their influence can be successfully resisted.

There has hitherto existed, we may hope, among simple-minded people generally, a good degree of reverence for the Sacred Scripture, of the nature and origin of which little has been known. When the Lord was on the earth, he predicted that John should tarry till he came. By John was represented charity in works, or the good of love. Of Peter it was foretold, that when he was old he should stretch forth his hands, and another should gird him, and carry him whither he would not. Such has been the condition of the faith of the first Christian church. We believe that this reverence for the Scriptures will be found with those who are denominated by John. It is the fading glory of the first Christian church, which still lingers about the head of the beloved disciple: but it is fast passing away; and, in itself, it is defenceless as a child. It may weep at such attacks as this in the "Register," but it has no power to oppose them. It can receive this power only from the truths and doctrines of the New Church.

It is true that these views of the Bible "remove all those targets at which the arrows of the infidel have been aimed."

It is difficult to conceive what greater concessions the infidel can ask. His citadel is not only taken, but occupied. He would doubtless be willing to admit that the Bible contains much truth, and could ask nothing more than the privilege of receiving or rejecting, according as its statements please or displease, "the subjective test" which he "supplies."

The revelation of the spiritual sense of the Word is the only means by which this torrent of infidelity can be checked; and there is no middle ground, which is at all tenable, between the acknowledgment of this sense, and the open rejection of all which deserves the name of inspiration. Unitarianism, if we may believe the writer in the "Register," has made a near approach to this consummation; and Orthodoxy stands trembling on its way to it. But, in these latter days, "the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the Book, and to loose the seven seals thereof;" and all who are willing to come to him may be enlightened. The soldiers were not permitted to rend the coat which was without seam, woven from top throughout. The outer garments were divided among them; but the spiritual sense of the Word remains in its integrity. As this sense is revealed, human reason is enlightened from above; but it can be illumined only by coming, humbly and reverently, to the Word, which is the fountain of life and light. Up to the time of this revelation, it was well that reason should have been held subject to faith. In this we see the infinite goodness and wisdom of the Lord.

It is extremely unpleasant to spread on the pages of the magazine such views of inspiration as are presented in the "Register;" but it seems to us that it may be useful to do so. Unless the members of the New Church understand the character of the falsities which are prevailing around them, they cannot act wisely and judiciously in their efforts to remove them. They also need to see the subject in its true light for their own protection. They need to see the importance and necessity of drawing near each other, and uniting together, that they may act the more efficiently in extending a knowledge of the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church; and that all who come

under their influence, and especially their children, may be protected from sentiments so destructive of all true views of the inspiration of the Word, and of the feelings of reverence with which it should be approached and regarded. The remains of infancy and childhood, without which regeneration could not be effected, are especially derived from the Sacred Scripture; and any thing which tends to destroy the love and reverence in which it is held, tends to destroy those remains, and thus to close up the way to heaven.

In the following extract, Swedenborg gives the reason why the spiritual sense of the Word could not have been revealed till after the accomplishment of the Last Judgment: —

"The spiritual sense of the Word could not be opened to the Christian churches; for, if it had been opened, they would have falsified and perverted it by ideas grounded in fallacies, and so would have profaned it. On this account, also, no person will hereafter be admitted into the spiritual sense of the Word, unless he is in genuine truths from good: and no one can be in genuine truths from good, unless in his heart he acknowledge the Lord alone as the God of heaven and earth; for from him is every good and truth thence derived. The reason why the spiritual sense of the Word is, at this day, opened, and genuine truths and goods thereby disclosed, is because the last judgment has been accomplished by the Lord, and thereby all things in the heavens and the hells are reduced to order; and thus it can be provided by the Lord that the genuine truths and goods which are in the spiritual sense of the Word may not be violated, as would have been the case had they been laid open before" (*A.E.* No. 376).

The following is a portion of the article found in the "Register:" —

"The Orthodox regard the Bible as a unit, as a direct communication from God to man, as infallible in all its statements, and as a perfect rule of faith and practice. The Unitarians regard it as a collection of histories, legends, songs, poems, prophecies, and letters, written in various ages, some of greater, and some of less, religious value, but together forming the best book in the world; as the embodiment of great religious truths communicated from God, but transmitted by fallible men, and mixed with human speculations,

descriptions, and reasonings; and as a priceless treasury, from whose 'precious stones, gold, wood, hay, stubble,' every reader must select as divine what experience has taught to be most valuable for his own soul.

"Without discussing the strength of the arguments by which these views are supported, we propose to examine their comparative moral influence. It is frequently said that our views of the Bible sap the outward foundations of religion and virtue, and fail of promoting an exalted inward spiritual life. If it can be shown that these representations are not only untrue, but that the very opposite effects are produced, a great stumbling-block will be taken from the progress of many earnest minds.

"I. Unitarian views of its character are conducive to a surer, if not to a stronger, respect for the Bible itself. Much of the reverence with which it is regarded by the Orthodox is traditional. Children are taught, from their earliest years, that it is a perfect book, divinely produced. A respect for it is thus aroused, which is wholly independent of an appreciation of its contents. It is valued for a reason no more spiritual than that which made the Arabians revere the Caaba, — a stone said to have fallen from heaven.

"With many persons this superstitious regard continues through life; with others, the soul's experience of its power and truth awakens, in subsequent years, an appreciation of its real worth; but, with a large class of minds, a directly opposite effect is produced. Being taught, while children, that every word of its contents is divine, that its parts all harmonize with each other, and that its morality and religion are perfect, they are shocked, when they come to examine it for themselves, by the many things which seem inconsistent with this view. They find God represented, in some parts, as a leader of armies; jealous, angry; commanding the slaughter of cattle and children. In one place they are told that no man hath at any time seen God; in another, that 'the Lord spake to Moses, face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.'

"The Psalms contain imprecations against enemies; the different Gospels disagree; quotations from the Old Testament in the New are incorrect, and its accounts of physical affairs are in direct contradiction to the conclusions of science. As a natural result of these discoveries, their traditional respect for the Bible fades away. Having learned to consider it as a unit, they are obliged, if they give up one part, to reject the whole. Hence, rather than accept its errors, they trample on its truths: and their contempt for the book is made the greater by re-acting from their ungrounded reverence; just as the pagans of Egypt trembled with pious horror when the soldier climbed up to strike the statue of their god Serapis, but overwhelmed it with ridicule when a colony of rats ran out of its prostrated sides.

"This result is no fancy-picture. Every day is verifying its truth. A large proportion of the men who have become infidels

were trained to believe the Bible infallible. The step from the sublime to the ridiculous is not shorter than from superstition to scepticism. Unbelief, arising from this cause, prevails to an alarming extent among the most intelligent men of our land, — physicians, lawyers, merchants, and statesmen. Orthodoxy, by claiming too much for the Scriptures, is doing more to destroy their real authority than all the atheistic attacks they have ever endured. . . .

"II. Unitarianism regards the Bible as a means; while it is the tendency of Orthodoxy to look upon it as an end. To illustrate: The Orthodox consider reading the Bible as, in and of itself, a virtue. They place this duty on the same footing as prayer. Its very words are supposed to have a religious efficacy. Its truths in any other form — in a new translation, for instance — would lose their chief worth. To alter its expressions, to correct even its typographical errors, they regard as sacrilege. They put it, in short, as the Romanists do their pope, in the place of God. We have seen many persons who thought reading a chapter of genealogies was worshipping Jehovah; and our own conscience smites us still for earning the reputation of a pious child by our interest in the Book of Judges, in those days when we used to kill cats, rob orchards, and play truant from school.

"Such a result, though not a necessary, is a natural, consequence of Orthodox views. If the Bible is the infallible expression of God's thoughts, then communion with it is likely, by many minds, to be regarded as equivalent to communion with him; but if it is considered as an imperfect medium of instruction, a supplement of nature, and no more sacred than the flowers, the stars, and the trees, the reader will be contented, not with communing with its chapters, but with making these the means of communing with God. . . .

"III. Orthodox views of the Bible have sadly interfered with the progress of moral reforms. If all its parts are equally inspired and infallible, then the words of Him who spake as never man spake are of no more authority than the crudest conceptions of the Epistles, or the most anthropomorphic representations of the Pentateuch; and in accordance with the hermeneutical rule, that the general must be explained by the specific, the profound and universal principles of the Sermon on the Mount must be modified by the semi-barbaric institutions of Moses and the illogical reasonings of Paul. In this way the Bible has been made an obstacle in the path of reform, and some of the foulest errors of barbarism have been perpetuated and upheld in Christian communities. There can be no question with a candid mind, that the Scriptures, taken as a whole, contain more numerous and explicit sanctions of slavery, wine-drinking, polygamy, tyranny, and war, than condemnation of these sins: hence, if the Old Testament is as authoritative as the New, their practice ought to be regarded as right. This view is the one which their advocates, in all ages of Christianity, have assumed. The friends

of peace have always had Joshua and Judges hurled at their heads; our fathers, in the Revolution, were morally combated with St. Paul; the strongest arguments against the temperance movement were drawn from the Bible, and urged by Orthodox ministers; the Mormons cover their sin of a dozen wives with chapters from the Book of books; and the supporters of slavery lock the chains round their victims with divine precepts and infallible curses. It is in vain to say that the Bible's commands, in reference to these sins, were accommodations to a peculiar state of society, and are no longer to be applied. 'Poor weak human reason sit in judgment upon a Book, every word of which is infallible?' Right and wrong are eternal principles, — the same in Judea as in America, with Moses as with Christ; and God can know no accommodation inconsistent with absolute truth.

"Against our views of the Bible, on the other hand, no such objections can be urged. Applying, as we do, a subjective test to its statements, nothing can be urged as authority against our positions which that test will not recognize. If the words of Scripture are opposed to any moral movement, we assert, the very fact that they are so opposed is the strongest possible proof they could not have come from God, and hence that they are of no weight against it. All these great truths, however, and moral principles, with which the Bible is crowded, we are as ready as the Orthodox to employ in the promotion of reform. In other words, we use the light of the Bible, as well as of reason, to see our path; but we do not use the darkness of the Bible, in neglect of reason, to stumble by, and wander from the way.

"IV. Unitarian views of the Bible make it as good a standard of truth as the Orthodox. It is frequently objected to us, that we deny the infallibility of the Bible, and allow every man to be a judge; that we have no certain rule of faith and practice; and that the doctrines and precepts we derive from it will be various as the minds of men. We admit this objection in its full force; but reply, that, practically, the Orthodox views have led to the same result. Look at the Orthodox denominations, and tell us where is the evidence in their creeds and conduct that they have a perfect rule of faith and practice. Look at the history of that part of the church which has regarded the Bible as infallible, — at their feuds, their heresies, their persecutions, and their continual changes, — and see whether there is any imaginable error for which they have not found a sanction in their unerring guide. . . .

"For these reasons, we think that Unitarian views of the Bible make it a more valuable book than those of the Orthodox. On the one hand, we remove from it all those targets at which the arrows of the infidel have been aimed, and blunt all these weapons which have been drawn from it by the slaveholder, polygamist, and drunkard; and, on the other, we derive from its pages all the consolation, instruction, and spiritual life, that are found there by the advocates of its infallibility."

HAPPINESS.

A Lecture delivered at a Social Meeting of the New Church in Boston, Feb. 25, 1858.

BY EDWIN HALE ABBOT.

THE whole creation seems busied in a search for happiness. The plant turns toward the sunbeam; the animal seeks what shall delight the affection which forms its life; the man strives to gratify the cravings of love in ways as various as the loves which prompt the effort. Everywhere delight is sought; and delight gives life and happiness.

The common beliefs which all men hold, the common longings which all men share, always teach a great truth. Within is always hidden some intuition or some desire which is inborn in every soul, — a part of human nature, not a peculiarity of a single individual. It has been well said, that the universal faith in the existence of a God, and in his care of the world, proves the truth as conclusively as a mathematical demonstration. Such great universal truths are the objects which the eye of the race beholds, and all men yield to that vision the same credence which each one yields to his own organs of sight.

The common longing for happiness, and the instinctive search which all make for it, prove it to be something as orderly, and essential to life, as air is to the lungs. Since all men seek it, and wish only the best, it is possible to draw from any one's theory of happiness something which shall help our own search, even if it be only a knowledge of the pit into which another has fallen. Happiness, therefore, is the subject of this lecture, — a subject old and worn, and yet ever new, because it is a central point in all philosophies of life. Every man forms for himself some philosophy of life, by which, as it is wise or foolish, he stands or falls; and a wise man always gathers from the systems of others something which may make his own more simple and straightforward.

The world is full of counterfeits, which, with some, pass for happiness. To follow out their history and nature would

be saddening. Vice often seeks to wear the garb of virtue; and Misery often decks herself out, in the vain effort to seem beautiful and happy. The painted cheek, however, is only the more repulsive, because it wears the semblance of an innocent blush; and devils can hardly seem more infernal than when they would appear as angels of light. Rochefoucauld, one of the bitterest and most cynical of philosophers, calls hypocrisy "the homage which vice pays to virtue." It surely must be homage unwillingly paid; and a severer punishment for vice can scarcely be imagined than the rendering of such a tribute. Certainly that life cannot be called happy which is forced to assume the appearance of the very thing which it most bitterly hates. We will not dwell, however, upon the counterfeits of happiness by which folly is deceived, and under which vice tries to hide, even from itself, its own foulness. They resemble happiness only as the fearful red glare of midnight fire — turned back to earth by the darkened heavens, and glowing more awfully as the clouds are more black — resembles the golden sunshine of beautiful spring, where birds are singing, and boughs are waving under a bright blue sky. The wise man sees, and the good man feels, that they are counterfeits; and even the bad man will some day as surely know the truth.

Merriment often passes for happiness. To call it a counterfeit would be too harsh; yet it is only a semblance. It is an exterior which happiness sometimes wears; but it is an exterior common to animals as well as men. The kitten runs after the ball of yarn, the calves chase each other round the pasture, the lambs sport on the hillside. Merriment may be innocent and lovely. Its true home seems to be the face of a child, where a smile or a tear is always shining. A merry child suggests a pleasant thought; but a merry man seems somewhat akin to a circus clown. Merriment is always on the surface, and implies effort: it must always, therefore, be temporary. When December rolls away, we wish our friends a *happy* new year. To wish a *merry* year would contain something dreary. Merriment seems beautiful in the child, because the child's whole conscious life is on the surface. Trifles turn the smile into the

shower, and trifles again restore the sunshine before the drops on the cheek are dried.

Merriment depends on things without. Men seldom laugh when they are alone. Merriment, rather than happiness, is sought in places of amusement; for food is there given to an appetite, which, though very often harmless, still desires things of the earth. As merriment is the natural life of children, much of it in a man often shows that childish things have not been laid aside. It may be childlike; it is more often childish.

Merriment may be enjoyed by the evil. Wicked and good men may be merry together, but never happy. Merriment is to happiness what the brook is to the river, and the child to the man. The brook tumbles down the mountain-side, rippling and singing, and its surface is wavy with the lines of the laughter which is filling the air with pleasant sound. The whole body of the stream shares in it; and a stick, thrown carelessly in, changes the tune, and disturbs the dancing motions. It is a lovely sight, and its music seems like the sweet voices of children breaking the still air. But the brook deepens into the river, and the tinkling song dies away. The child is growing into the man, and is beginning to perform other uses than simply to feed the good affections in other hearts by the spectacle of simple innocence. The stately tide of the river flows onward; and now the current, which a twig would have turned before, rolls quietly along, though a ship sink into its bosom. The child has grown into the man; and deep sorrow, and the wrecking of cherished plans, are tearlessly and silently met, and hidden in his own breast, and left buried in the past; and the waves which ceaselessly rise and fall above show no sign of what lies underneath. On the surface the ripples still play, and the eddies glance prettily back the sunbeams, and curl around the floating leaf and straw; but the river bears the straws and leaves along whither it will, and is no longer controlled by the things which fall upon it. They help to make it pleasant and beautiful; but they are only trifles, which show how the current sets, but do not shape its course.

Nothing is lovelier in a child than innocent merriment; but

it should gradually deepen into happiness. A merry childhood is a true childhood, and I think that it is the best preparation for a happy manhood. The brook should ripple and sing, and the surface of the river ought to be covered with the images of its early eddies; but the laugh of the child is expressed appropriately in the smile of the man, and the varied music of the brook is tempered into the steady, pleasant murmur of the rush of many waters.

Merriment sometimes serves to express happiness; but the purest happiness can find no expression in merriment. In the highest heavens, words and sounds are not needed; for thought is communicated by the glance of the eye, and affection by the expression of the face. "In laughter," says Swedenborg, "there is generally something which is not altogether good;" and probably, among the angels, laughter is not heard, or, certainly, not loud laughter. Even on earth, merriment is entirely absent in seasons of the deepest happiness. Merriment always contains effort; and, where effort is, full peace cannot be, and true happiness can exist only in perfect peace. Nay even, the tenderest affection is too delicate for any merriment, and cannot endure even the jesting which leads towards it. Between love and love, truth only can come; and, in all merriment between rational understandings, that which gives rise to it almost always contains something which, if not false, is nevertheless viewed obliquely, and not in the straight, clear line of truth. The truest affection loves the real expression of the face far better than any other, because through it, as through a smooth, transparent stream, the soul is clearly seen. Any cause, even the lightest breeze which ruffles the surface, shuts from sight the clear depths within; and, if the view be thus cut off long, the soul pines for what it loves, and becomes unhappy. It is not safe for dear friends to jest much, or to be too merry together. Every heart yearns after the true and simple words of affection. If they are not given, the soul is deprived of needful food; and sickness, perhaps even death, will follow.

Merriment, then, is not happiness: it is rather the natural image of happiness, which does not seem lovely in the presence

of its original. They cannot long keep company together without the destruction of happiness by its own image. Like the natural body, merriment dwells on a natural plane. It can no more be present among affections truly spiritual than the body of flesh can clothe an angel in heaven. Its true place, then, is among those who live on the plane of nature, like children, who are beginning life there where all must begin. Surely, for a rational man to pursue merriment, and think it happiness, must be a sad life; and such, even if they preserve innocence in the pursuit, must always be the life of those who seek their delight in a round of pleasure. If, however, in their pleasures, they part with the innocence of the child, they barter merriment for some of those dreadful counterfeits which devils love and seek. Where such delights abide, the snake is always hidden among the leaves, and surely stings him who plucks the forbidden fruit, — fruit which, even if plucked, turns to ashes in the grasp.

Perhaps this estimate of merriment may seem harsh and condemnatory. Any thing, rather than severity, is due to so kindly and innocent a guest. Our natural selfishness, however, deems only what is the best and highest of all things to be good enough for *us*. To acknowledge, therefore, that merriment is not the highest form of happiness, seems to our pride to condemn it; and what is only humble is rejected as if it were evil. Such judgment is wrong. Our state is always changing, and morning and evening succeed one another even among angels; and for morning that is not suitable, which may be fit for evening. The young day, radiant with the strength of the rising sun, is the season of useful effort; and everywhere man goeth forth unto his work and to his labor until the evening. Evening, however, is a sign of approaching night, in which no man can work; and so the work is laid aside as night draws nigh, and is succeeded by occupation appropriate to the time. In the employment of the day, men follow, as in every thing else, the law of correspondence. Business and professional labor fill the morning, and in his daily work every one finds much happiness. If the choice is wise, daily labor never becomes toil, but is

full of true happiness, though there is little merriment in it. The evening, however, is the time for recreation and merriment. It is a short season, however, and night quickly follows; and it seems hardly good to extend the search for pleasure far into that season which has no existence in heaven. The social pleasures of the game and conversation, the theatre, the concert, and the ball, are appropriate in the evening, and are useful, pleasant, and orderly then. At other times, however, they seem out of place. The decorations of the ballroom do not accord with morning sunlight; the full dress and white gloves are reserved for evening; and there is hardly a more dismal sight than the stage by daylight. A dancing-party during the forenoon would seem sadly strange, and out of place; and, at such a time, it would scarcely be possible to enjoy its innocent pleasures. The card-table and its pleasant circle would seem out of time, when the sun is travelling its morning path. There is a time for play and a time for work; but because the play is for the sake of the work, and therefore of a nature not so high as the work it serves, surely it is unreasonable to scorn it, because our pride is content only when it gains what seems highest and best. In the highest heavens, words and sounds are not needed, because the eye and the face express far more than the ear can perceive. Yet it would be no heavenly feeling which would make men, for that reason, abandon the use of speech, or prompt such an imitation of angelic life. Orderly life, in the place and time of our present being, is always the truest image of heavenly life, of which we then are capable. There is, therefore, a time for smiling cheerfulness, as well as for silent joy; and it is only pride which would deny the fact. But, if grief may lie too deep for tears, surely happiness also may be too pure and heavenly for laughter and merriment, and sometimes even for smiles. Nothing can be more unwise than to condemn that which is good because it is not better. Our Father has seen that merriment giveth food good for the evening hours. Let us thankfully, then, receive it at his hand, and not scornfully reject what is food appropriate for

us simply because it may not be the food which is best for angels.

We have now cast a passing glance on the counterfeits of happiness, and have seen how good is the claim of merriment to be taken for it. We may therefore take another step, and see if we cannot learn something of happiness from the company it keeps.

Men have always felt that happiness is the true companion of goodness, while misery and unhappiness are the appropriate accompaniments of vice. In the very nature of the soul, the union of goodness and happiness is recognized as a true marriage; and our sense of justice is outraged when they seem to be divorced. In stories, even, the common voice of humanity demands that virtue be rewarded, and vice punished; and that, in finite creation at least, what is rather sadly called *poetical* justice should always be administered. Whenever poetical justice is violated, there is always felt an unsatisfied longing, craving an exact knowledge of the reward of good conduct. In the great creation of God, men reverently bow the head before the unsearchable wisdom which sometimes separates from goodness the earthly success which it seems to deserve. In the world, however, which the novelist creates, although all admit that prosperity and happy life are not synonymous, still the universal prompting of human nature itself seeks to bestow upon the hero the grosser forms even of earthly prosperity, and to requite with misery the evil deeds of his foes. It is not pretended that prosperity is an adequate reward for self-devotion; on the contrary, all feel that it is not. The feeling only reveals an inborn consciousness that happiness, in all its forms, belongs of right to the good alone; and shows an effort never to put asunder what God has, in the great laws of order, joined together. And if sometimes the good are portrayed as suffering, and even as crushed to earth until earth fades from sight, it is only because the hand of a master boldly points in silence to the world beyond human vision, where the wrong is made right, and the conflict of ages ended. The Saxon Rowena, and not the gentle Jewess Rebecca, may marry Wilfrid of Ivanhoe; Little Nell may sink

to sleep, worn out by her life of toil; Uncle Tom may expire in torment on the banks of Red River. Such finales, however, would be unendurable, if they did not speak to the soul of immortal joy beyond and above the reach of all earthly sorrow.

Men have always loved tragedy. From the days of the grand old Æschylus downward, a higher place has been assigned to the Tragic than to the Comic Muse; yet the one traffics in tears, and the other in smiles: and the very life of tragedy is sadness, while comedy deals only in merriment and laughter. I think the reason of the inconsistency is clear. The sight of virtue overpowered on earth raises the eye toward heaven to behold its fortune there. The sober realities in which tragedy deals, and the sad, stern tones which she utters, yield, in the midst of a painful thrill at earthly pangs, something of happiness more deep and satisfying than the laughter of earth can give. They raise the thoughts to a higher plane, and touch something which lies deeper in the heart than the seat of merriment. The eye which is raised toward heaven, even though full of tears, sees, however dimly, something which gives joy in the midst of grief, and seems lovelier far than the sight of earth. We sympathize with Hamlet; we can only laugh at Falstaff. Queen Katherine, retiring in disgrace from the presence of Henry, calls forth, unconsciously, a reverence for womanly sorrow nobly borne; and a sympathy, within which lies concealed, under external pain, a feeling far more akin to happiness than any which the wilful wife of Petruchio can excite. Comedy supplies no food for any sad emotion; and yet Tragedy, though it moves among the outward forms of sorrow, still gives a true though painful happiness, which has always been more highly esteemed than the open laughter of its rival.

In the plays which delight the angels on the confines of heaven, surely there can be nothing either of the sternness of tragedy, or the boisterous mirth of comedy. In them no evil character is represented; but, for the sake of contrast, the less good vary the presentation, that the more good may be manifest. Since the time of the Last Judgment, the stage, too, has seemed to receive new life, and, out of old forms, to eject old evil, and evolve new good. A new race of plays has been

born, made up of neither tragedies nor comedies, though the old names are still preserved; and, as the church grows, gradually there must be produced a drama which will far excel the grandest production even of the grandest of the old tragic poets, — a drama where death and sensuality both will be absent, and a likeness to the plays of the angels be more and more clearly seen.

So evident is the connection of goodness and happiness, that some seek the one as the price of the other. The world is full of the worldly philosophy, which bids men be good in order to be happy; and its selfishness has even stolen into the pulpit, and spoken through the lips of the priest. How is the nature of such philosophy changed, if the payment is only postponed until after death, and not meted out on this side of the grave! Its maxims, however, require no comment. They can deceive no good man; and their only use is to show that even bad men see that happiness and virtue walk hand in hand.

Happiness, then, is often counterfeited, but never successfully. Within all disguises, misery hides a sad face, and the real features always peep out at last. Neither is merriment happiness, any more than the body is the man. Like the body, it is laid aside when true happiness is born; for it is needed no longer. Nor yet is happiness goodness, although it is felt to be its inseparable companion. What, then, is happiness?

Happiness is an *effect*, not the direct object of search. Goodness is the substance of which happiness is the shadow. Happiness is the constant companion of good action, never that which action seeks to make. If the child stops to admire the dancing of his shadow, the motion dies. If he tries to catch the shadow, how does he succeed? If he even looks back upon it, does he not turn his face away from the sun and the heavens? Happiness is not to be found by searching. If we try to find the shadow among the things which look most like it, it is lost in the darkness. If we abandon the search, and run out into the sunlight, lo, it runs behind us, and keeps pace with every step. Rasselas wanders over the earth to find that which he left behind in the valley. He could not retain his happy life when he strove to grasp it as his own.

All men seek happiness. The evil seek it for themselves,

and they find only misery. The good seek it for others; and, behold, it is always in their own hearts. None more earnestly pursue happiness than the devils in hell. Nowhere is happiness so little an object of longing as among the angels in heaven. The sunbeam shines through the window, and spreads a golden glory through the room as it lies upon the floor. We close the shutter that we may keep it, and make it our own; and where is the sunshine then? God giveth us the sunshine freely, but we cannot dissever it from its source. He giveth us happiness as freely, but we cannot receive it unless we turn to the Giver from whom it flows.

We are nowhere told in the Word *to seek happiness;* but we are told to "*seek peace, and pursue it:*" and the same verse which contains the injunction teaches the way, — "*Depart from evil, and do good.*" We become happy in precisely the same way in which we become good; and we become good by shunning evil as sin, not by seeking some special form of goodness. We grow to be gentle and kind by refusing to utter the harsh word, and by subduing the unlovely sound. The evening retrospect will not often be satisfactory when we have planned the good things of the day. When we say, "I will do *this* good thing," we make the act artificial, not natural; we undertake to form ourselves; we intermingle our imperfect workmanship in that which the Lord is seeking to make; we assume guidance which is not for us. It is the Lord who leadeth us through the green pastures and beside the still waters; and, even if the path be through the valley of the shadow of death, we need fear no evil. It is only the valley of the *shadow,* not of the reality, into which He leads us. When we say, "I will shun this evil as a sin," then we undertake our proper work. If we refuse to utter the unkind word, we need never fear that the sound which falls from the lips will be unpleasant. If we open the shutter, the sunlight will stream in. If we open the door, the Lord of life will enter. It is our part to wash and make clean. It is His bounty which gives us the bread and the wine. If we perform the baptism, He will spread before us the Holy Supper.

We seek goodness and peace: we find them by putting away what is bad and troubling. We desire happiness: we obtain it by driving away the unhappy thought which deprives us of it.

Happiness depends upon what is within, and not on the objects without. It is hard to understand and to believe this great truth; and yet all know how differently the voice of Nature sounds at different times, and how diverse is the expression of her face. The breezes of June can sigh mournfully, and the birds sing dirges; while the bleakness even of November can be radiant with smiles. It once happened to me to leave for the first time the sick-chamber, where I had been a prisoner for months, in the middle of November. Never have the green leaves and waving branches and singing birds, and all the countless glories of spring and summer, seemed so inconceivably lovely as did then the bare boughs and withered grass along the barren seaside-road, whither, after that weary confinement, I was carried on my first ride. Where was the beauty which my eyes beheld? Surely not in the objects which the retina then reflected. We see our own faces in the great mirror of earth, sea, and sky; and nature echoes back our own words. Earth is joyful with the joyous, and sad with the sorrowful. To the eye of the mourner, the sun is darkened at noon: to the happy, even the raindrops tinkle merrily as they beat upon the roof.

If, then, even here on earth, the sphere of the soul can cast a pall over the heavens, at the same time when we know that they are bright to other mortals, can we not see, that, even here, happiness does not depend on things without? If we do not become independent of external objects here, how can we be happy in the other life, where the world without is the image of the world within?

What is thus true of the aspect of nature is equally true of the spiritual influences which surround us in our homes and lives. We shall succeed no better in seeking our own happiness there than devils succeed in the same search in their infernal dwellings. Home should be the abode of all that is delightful, a heaven on earth: but, if it is not; nay, even

if to some unhappy ones it seems perhaps almost the opposite, — shall we strive to live in it as devils, or as angels? In hell, angels are sometimes present; and surely, in performing angelic duties even there, they do not lose angelic happiness. Heaven is within their hearts; and the image of heaven should be always in our souls also. If we are not learning to live happily in the present, we cannot live happily in the future; and, if we cannot be happy on earth, we are rendering it impossible for us to be happy in heaven. And, if we are not happy in heaven, happiness will surely be sought elsewhere; and we shall then abide in the place where we are least miserable.

No one can truly enjoy any pleasure until he can cheerfully resign it, if wisdom demands the sacrifice. No one is prepared for marriage until he can contentedly, at least, live alone. No one is ready for a home who cannot, if necessary, cheerfully wander. No one, in short, can ever be happy in any condition which he seeks merely as a refuge from present discomfort.

All, except perhaps the angels, can, and undoubtedly do, conceive of a state happier than their present one. If they did not conceive of such a state, they would seek no change; and such seeking need not contain any thing which is wrong. Certainly there need be no sin in the longing which every true man must feel for a wife and a home, or in the effort which he makes to win them both. Before, however, any conception of future happiness can be realized as we imagine it, contentment and cheerfulness in the lot where now our daily life is placed must dwell constantly in the breast.

Since happiness abides within, and does not depend on outward circumstance, no true judgment can be formed about the happiness of others. Every one will doubtless remember when, at the very time that others judged him even wretched, sweet peace inexpressible was in reality filling his heart. Earthly sight cannot discern the ministry of angels, nor tell by whom their presence is felt. One thing, however, is certain: the good, *so far as they are good*, are always happy. Undoubtedly their peace is disturbed during temptation; but temptation assails them through their evils alone. Moreover, as the whole heaven is in the image of

the Lord, and makes the Grand Man, and as man is, in his turn, a smaller image of the same heavenly form; so is each temptation which removes an evil an image of the whole life by which the multitude are expelled. When life is ended, the season of heavenly peace succeeds. In like manner, after each temptation, — a microcosm of life, — appears a like finite image of the peace which follows life. To us, also, angels minister, when the sojourn in the wilderness is ended.

We are taught to pray that the kingdom of heaven may come. It is the effort of all good lives to realize this prayer, and to make earth like heaven. The happiness of earth, then, ought to be like the happiness of heaven; and that which men seek, should be the same which angels enjoy. You will doubtless remember how Swedenborg describes the way in which some spirits were taught in what consisted heavenly joy and eternal happiness. "It is," said the angel, "the delight of doing something useful to ourselves and others; and the delight of use derives its essence from love, and its existence from wisdom: the delight of use arising from love, through wisdom, is the life and soul of all heavenly joys. In the heavens there are most joyful consociations, which exhilarate the minds of the angels, delight their hearts, fill their bosoms with pleasure, and recreate their bodies; but not until they have performed uses in their functions and employments. From these uses is the soul or life of all their joys and delights: and, if this soul or life be taken away, accessory joys gradually become no joys; exciting, first of all, indifference; then disgust; and, lastly, sorrow and anxiety."

It seems sometimes strange that some persons appear to have no trouble, and that they seem always happy, when we nevertheless know that their lives do not deserve happiness. Their projects succeed, and their paths are sunshiny, when clouds hang round the steps of those whom we know to be better men. Oftentimes, undoubtedly, the exterior deceives us; but such cases do exist. They are not inexplicable, however, if we remember the work which Divine Providence tries to do for each. Some men live so that they cannot be spiritually tempted. How can a libertine, plunged in licentiousness, be

anxious about the preservation of spiritual purity in word and thought and desire, when he daily revels in even natural impurity? How can he, much more, be anxious lest he pervert the truths of the Word, and thus commit the spiritual sin which corresponds to his natural abominations, when he daily breaks, without scruple, the Ten Commandments? This man is doubtless spared the pain of the spiritual temptations; but only because they can do him no good, nor even touch him at all. In like manner, others live so that not even natural trial can fall to their lot. They are not shielded from the tempest, because they deserve exemption, but because they so live that its first blast would only make them more evil than they are. The very permission of temptation proves that it can be resisted. It is meant to remove a spiritual evil, and to do us good. It is permitted, therefore, only where and when it can be successfully resisted. The temptations of to-day, can to-day be conquered. A year ago, perhaps, they absolutely could not have been resisted. They were not allowed to assail us, therefore, a year ago and they do assail us to-day, for one and the same reason. The Lord is helping us to put away our evils, not seeking to crush our very souls. The diamond is the most precious of jewels. To make its facets reveal their glorious light, however, half of it must be worn off by a grinding so severe that any other stone would be wholly powdered by the process. If earthly joys are one by one removed, it is because in their loss the soul is growing blessed, and because our Father is thus storing up in heaven for us an eternal treasure, which he will give to us as soon as it has reached the greatest possible dimensions. Holy is the ministry of sorrow. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves." And He who spake as never man spoke, He who alone could endure the crucifixion and the agonies of Calvary, hath himself said, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."

Although the age of open guidance from heaven long since passed away, men have always continued to seek for some external guidance in their search for happiness, and all the more

earnestly as their idea of happiness sank lower and lower, and was merging into the idea of mere earthly success. In early times such guidance was useful, and was freely given to every nation through the rites of religion and by its ministers. The Jews obtained an audible response through the Urim and Thummim, the breastplate of the high priest. But, when the human race passed out of a state of childhood, the possibility of such guidance ceased. Open guidance interferes with the growing freedom of manhood. The means by which it had been given, therefore, were now removed; and men were taught that to seek it was wrong. Still there has always been throughout the world a disposition to seek it, which has expressed itself in many forms of oracles, astrology, diviners, fortune-tellers, omens, lots, sortes Virgilianæ, sortes Biblianæ, and in the darker forms of magic, black-art, and necromancy. I think that now this desire for external light and guidance is wholly wrong, is only present as a temptation, and ought always to be resisted. The doctrines of our church clearly teach that man is led by the Lord, but that he is led always *through his own understanding*, so that the thought and act seem wholly his own also. We should never seek to throw away this responsibility; for it is the precious jewel of human freedom. The way to seek for guidance from the Lord is not, to ask for it, and then to watch for some outside omen, some chance indication, which shall decide the question without our own effort. We may feel very sure that we shall see no sign which does not agree with our own wish. To follow this course is only to give full rein to our inclinations, not to follow the dictate of wisdom, which does not often consort with our own preference. Certainly, still less is it right to revive the old horrors of necromancy; to go to some wretched being, who, by casting away his own freedom, calls up a spirit that will surely strive to take away our freedom also. Surely it is no small *sin* to voluntarily throw away that freedom which the Lord deemed so precious, that He came into the world to preserve it to us. We should not part with the priceless gift for a moment *ourselves;* and can it be a spirit from heaven that would approach us through so great a sin in *another?*

The way to seek light is still, and always will be, to draw nigh to the Lord, to approach him as he is now present in the world, and to touch the hem of his garment. He is present in the Word; and when we draw reverently near, and read the Book of Truth, we approach the High Priest's breastplate, and we touch the garments of Divinity. Light will then flow down into our thoughts through our own understanding; and the wise idea will *seem* the child of that understanding, although we shall *know* that it is not. Thus is guidance given us, not from without, but from within; not from earth, but from heaven; and, when we follow this guidance, we are *led by the Lord.*

Every thought of the understanding, and feeling of the heart, seems so entirely our own production, that it is hard to conceive that they are not our own creation. We know that we are free. We are apt to forget, however, that our freedom lies in *accepting* or *rejecting* the gift, not in *selecting* it. Though it is hard to conceive of the guidance of Divine Providence, even faintly, it certainly is possible to form some idea of it; and then, resting upon that idea, trustingly and fully to believe that we are always led by the Lord. A very common occurrence will perhaps help the conception.

It is a pretty sight to watch a little child learning to walk. He stands clinging fast to the chair, afraid even to try to step, and almost even to move. He can walk only by the free exercise of his own powers. No other will can render those tremulous muscles tense and firm. The child will only be frightened by any attempt at compulsion; and, so far from advancing, will only give up effort, sit down, and cry. Their little master alone can make those small, weak limbs obey his will, and advance in an orderly and successful manner. Others can only teach and persuade him to attempt a task which he only can perform. How, then, is he led to make the great endeavor?

The mother kneels before him, and, holding forth her hands, with winning words, and gentle sounds full of love and tenderness, and, far more expressive than words to the little

one, beckons him to traverse the narrow space which lies between him and the only home he knows, — his mother's bosom. The father, bending over him, encourages his child to totter toward that well-known spot. At last the little fellow straightens himself up laboriously, and, clinging tightly to his hold, fearfully reaches out a tiny, trembling foot, and then draws it back, and then again puts it forth, and at last takes his first step, and sinks into his mother's arms.

Thus he is led to begin, and in the same way to continue, his efforts, until at length he is successful. Emboldened now by the caresses which his first victory has won, he tries again. Perhaps he falls. See how every thing is prepared to save him, to keep him from falling; or, even if he does go down, to protect him so that he shall be hurt as little as possible, and be as little as possible discouraged from another trial. He must run the risk of falling: it is the price he pays for the power of learning to walk at all. He can walk only in freedom; and freedom to walk implies freedom to fall. But watchful love presides over the feeble efforts, and is ever ready to stretch forth a saving hand, and uphold the weak body; and the child knows that no harm can befall while his parents are by his side. Faith in their love, trust in their wisdom, and reliance upon their power, are, though he is himself wholly unconscious of such feelings, the true source whence he draws courage to take each of those early steps. Is that love less, when in later times it allows its child, as strength and skill are gained, to attempt a more dangerous journey than a simple passage across the parlor-floor to the mother's arms? Say, rather, that the *manifestation* of the love changes, not that the fountain is drying up at its source. If a mother's love cannot, in like manner, watch over the whole of the pathway of life, nor prevent the wanderings and falls of the man as it did the tumbles of the child, it is only because our heavenly Father sets limits to its exercise, when that exercise would cramp the freedom of the spirit, — freedom as essential to the soul's progress on the upward road, as that of the body is to the infant's first step upon the floor.

To me, a little child learning to walk presents an image of

the eternal life of every human being. We speak of *independence* and *freedom* as if they meant the same thing, — as if they were synonymes. It is a great error. In learning to walk, the child is free. He can move only in freedom; and yet he could hardly be more dependent than he is upon the love and care of others. Freedom is the birthright of every man; and freedom of the soul, at least, can be taken away by no human being. Independence, however, belongs to none. Man has perfect freedom, but no independence. The body depends for its subsistence upon the elements without, and for its existence upon Him who gives it the power to breathe. The soul, too, is not any more independent of those whom it loves, or of Him who perpetually gives it the power to love. The arms which, in countless homes all over the world, wherever a parent's heart yearns over the child of its affection, the mother throws around her infant to prevent, or at least to break, the fall, offer an everlasting image of those Arms which encircle every one of the children of earth in all the wanderings of life. The multitudinous events which crowd each hour are the beckonings, the gentle motions, the tender sounds, intelligible only to the mother and the child, by which our heavenly Parent is teaching us to come to him. In themselves, these little things are no more important than those allurements; and so, in the past, we do not care for them at all, nor even consciously remember them long. They are only means; and, when the end is gained, they are forgotten. Who cares now for the dinner he ate yesterday, and who can even remember that which he ate ten days ago? Yet yesterday, or ten days ago, we should not calmly have assented to their absence. In the present, however, these little things are of priceless importance. They are the guides of all the steps which make up the whole journey of life.

The entire philosophy of happy life is contained in our knowledge of Divine Providence. Every sorrowful, unhappy feeling springs from a practical disbelief in the loving providence of the Lord. Words cannot utter this great truth too strongly. Trust in Divine Providence is the source of happiness, as it is the source of courage; because nothing can make

us unhappy or cowardly where that trust is present. When trouble comes, our trust should whisper, "This pain is a sign from heaven to guide me to it. It is permitted to draw near only that it may remove some evil thing which cannot enter heaven. What, then, is the evil which it should remove?" When we think thus, all thought centres in *removing the evil*, not in mourning about the means by which the Lord is trying to make us angels, — trying to be indeed our Saviour, to heal our sick, to open our eyes, and to raise our dead to life again. In this effort to join in the work for which the sorrow is sent, we soon cease to know the sorrow at all. The cloud bursts open, and its silver lining is seen; and we love the very sorrow which has opened heaven to our gaze. Then unhappiness dies out in the heart, and peace is born in its place, — the beautiful offspring of the angelic messenger which visited us in the disguise of earthly grief.

Happiness is commonly spoken of as if it were only a *pleasure*. It is more: it is a *duty*. No man has a *right* to be unhappy. Unhappiness springs from distrust in Divine Providence; and that is a sin, and must be shunned as a sin. As it is a violation of love to the Lord, it is also a violation of the love of the neighbor. The whole body suffers with each member. The whole home is saddened by one sad face. An unhappy thought or an unhappy affection should be expelled at once. It comes from some evil spirit; and, if we would have heaven here, such company must not be admitted into our hearts. Happiness is a *duty* which we owe to the Lord and the neighbor, not merely a pleasure which we are free to enjoy or to throw away, as we choose, and yet be without sin.

In speaking of happiness, however, as a *duty*, and unhappiness as a *sin*, let us do it with the utmost gentleness. Nothing that is harsh or unkind is meant. The failure of efforts to do right, and the struggles against evil in ourselves, are often very painful; and the remembrance that our Lord was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," helps greatly to draw us near to Him who would bear our griefs and sorrows. It was not until the angel had troubled the waters that the pool was

filled with healing. The sorrow, however, which guides our steps to the foot of the cross that we may lay our burdens there, is wholly unlike the unhappiness which seeks merely oblivion for its own pangs. When we merely seek to forget sorrow, and so end the discomfort, we aim at the same result which the suicide hopes for. Such feelings a good man tries to drive away as soon as he recognizes their nature. Rather than drown their bitterness in any evil opiate, he would choose to drain the very dregs of bitterness. He would shrink with horror from any such relief for the pain which purifies. Within the outward suffering there is something which, though unconsciously, gives far more happiness than any such substitute; and the thought of happiness, *as a duty*, helps to bring that inner peace into conscious presence. Every wrong act is a violation of duty. We call it a sin, however, not to increase pain, but to aid resistance. When, too, we call happiness a duty, it is not to add to the burden of the unhappy, but to lighten it; for the consciousness of duty always helps to put away the evil, and therefore, too, the sad feeling.

The same means which render the angels blessed will make us happy on earth. The angels seek the happiness of others, and find their own in the search; and, if we would do the will of the Lord, as in heaven so also upon the earth, we, too, must join in the work of the angels. Their work is not toil, but heavenly delight; not the rule, but the very joy of eternity. We live on earth that we may here learn to draw from the same source the same happiness which makes heaven there. If we learn to love the work of an angel on earth, we shall, when the body falls off, then love the work of an angel in heaven. As soon as the lesson is learned, the place will be changed, earth will pass from sight, clouds will no more hide the sun, and the use of sorrow will be ended.

Those who gained, though perhaps unconsciously, the peace they sought, will still enjoy its infinitely increasing bliss when they wake among the angels, — angels also themselves, — the children of one Father, dwelling for ever in one happy home of love.

HYMN.

O THOU that rulest earth and heaven!
To thee shall endless praise be given:
Since thou art present everywhere,
Thou canst but listen to my prayer.
My spirit to the earth is bowed;
Despair upon my soul is pressing;
Draw thou aside the darkening cloud,
And show the sunlight of thy blessing:
Let gentle love to thee arise,
Like incense from a sacrifice;
Let evil fall before thy face,
Like ashes to the altar's base.

Oh! never is the heart alone
Which rests on thee, Paternal One!
No mortal is from evil free
Who leaves not all to follow thee:
For thou hast borne the weight of care,
And human ills hast stooped to borrow;
And thou hast taught us how to wear
The heavy, trailing robes of sorrow.
O Thou that rulest earth and heaven!
To thee shall endless praise be given:
Thou lovest all that need thy care;
Thou canst but hear the voice of prayer. J. R.

REPORT OF THE FALL-RIVER SOCIETY.

[Received too late for insertion in the Journal of the Massachusetts Association in our last number.]

OUR meetings for worship, and the sabbath school, are held in the lecture-room of the Young Men's Christian Association. The attendance is about the same as before reported; though some of our members have not been present with us often during the winter, in consequence of absence from the city. The number of members is *eleven*.

Our sabbath school consists of two teachers and *eleven* scholars. The average attendance is about nine. It is held throughout the year, on the afternoon of the sabbath. The Catechism, and Lessons on the Gospels, are used in the classes.

The evening meeting is held at the house of Mrs. Munday. We are now studying the work on "Heaven and Hell."

In January, the Rev. Mr. Hayward, of Brookline, preached for us, and administered the Holy Supper. The morning service was quite well attended, as it almost always is when we have a minister. In December, our leader was invited to attend the funeral of a lady who was not connected with our meeting. A large number of persons was present, who listened with deep attention to the truths of the New Dispensation.

We send five dollars for the use of the Association.

JOURNAL OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM. — TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING.

1. The Association met in the house of worship of the Frankford Society, on Monday, April 5, at ten and a half o'clock.

2. Rev. Thomas Wilks performed divine service, and preached from the following words: "And there thou shalt build thee an altar unto the Lord thy God, — an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them" (Deut. xxvii. 5).

Rev. Mr. Seddon, assisted by Rev. Mr. Wilks, then administered the most holy ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

3. The Association then organized for the transaction of business, — the President, Rev. Mr. Seddon, in the chair; and Messrs. Keffer and Kent were appointed a Committee to examine credentials, and report a list of delegates.

4. The Journal of last meeting was read and approved.

5. The Committee on Credentials then reported the following list of ministers and delegates: Rev. James Seddon, Rev. Thomas Wilks, Rev. W. H. Benade, Mr. E. A. Beaman.

Delegates from the Frankford Society. — Messrs. James Holt, John Lever, Thomas Whittington, John Seddon, W. Archer.

Philadelphia Second Society. — Messrs. C. S. Close, John Warren, W. Roberts.

Delaware-County Society. — Messrs. John C. Keffer, Thomas Kent, Lewis Watkins, Morris W. Heston, Jesse Hays.

Philadelphia Society (Cherry Street). — Messrs. B. F. Glenn, Edmund Ferrett, Dr. D. Cowley, Professor R. Tafel, J. E. Jackson.

Philadelphia Third Society. — Messrs. Joseph Hallowell, Charles C. Oram, E. A. Swope, Thomas Wilson, Samuel Sidebotham; David Snyder, *Treasurer.*

6. On motion of Mr. Roberts, the Philadelphia Society (Rev. Mr. Benade's) and Philadelphia Third Society were admitted as members of the Association.

7. Mr. Roberts made some remarks respecting the decease of Rev. Mr. Worrell, and offered the following resolutions; which, after amendment, were adopted: —

Whereas, Since the last meeting of the Association, our esteemed friend and brother, Rev. Isaac C. Worrell, has been removed to the spiritual world, and has left his earthly tabernacle for one "eternal, incorruptible, and that fadeth not away;" —

Be it Resolved, That, by the decease of our brother, a useful member of this Association, a worthy minister of the church, and an honest man and good citizen, has been removed from his natural connection with us.

Resolved, That, while to our natural feelings this deprivation is a sad and mournful one, we are not among those whose sorrows are without hope; and, while we mourn our natural loss, we rejoice with those who have become inhabitants of the blissful abodes prepared for the righteous.

Resolved, That we look beyond the dark and gloomy precincts of the grave, and find abundant consolation in the declarations of the Holy Word, and the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem.

"In my Father's house are many mansions." — "He is not here: he is risen. Why seek ye the living among the dead?"

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be furnished to the family of the deceased.

8. The election of officers for the ensuing year then took place; Messrs. Swope and Kent, tellers, who reported the following members duly elected: —

President	Rev. Thomas Wilks.
Vice-President	Rev. W. H. Benade.
Secretary	William Roberts.
Treasurer	David Snyder.

9. Reports from the Frankford Society, Delaware-County Society, Philadelphia Second and Philadelphia Third Societies, and from Rev. James Seddon, Ordaining Minister, were received and read.

10. The following resolutions were read and adopted: —

Resolved, That the Pennsylvania Association requests the General Convention of the New Church in the United States to constitute Thomas Wilks an Ordaining Minister.

Resolved, That a copy of the foregoing resolution be certified by the Vice-President and Secretary of the Association, and laid before the next meeting of the General Convention.

11. The following resolution was offered by Rev. Mr. Benade, and adopted: —

Resolved, That the President of this Association be its General Missionary.

Adjourned for one hour.

Afternoon Session.

12. The roll was called, and the minutes of the morning session read. Objections being made to their adoption, considerable discussion ensued; when Mr. Close moved that the proceedings of the morning be legalized by the Association, which motion was adopted.

13. Mr. Edmund A. Beaman was ordained, by Rev. James Seddon, into the first degree of the ministry.

14. *Voted*, That individual receivers may be admitted as members at any stated meeting, to continue during the current numerical year.

15. Dr. G. R. Starkey was elected a member of the Association, for the year 1858.

16. The Treasurer's Report was read and accepted: —

Balance last Report	$32.93
Cash paid for printing Journal	7.50
Balance	$25.43
Cash received from Delaware County	5.00
Cash received from Second Society, Philadelphia	5.00
Balance in hands of Treasurer	$35.43

17. *Voted*, That the Committee on Missionary Uses be instructed to make the set of books, furnished by this Association to the West Philadelphia Institute, complete, by supplying the duplicates of the volumes which have been improperly taken away.

18. A motion to reconsider the resolutions (No. 10) was put to a vote, and negatived.

19. The following resolution was offered by Mr. Keffer: —

Resolved, That this Association adopts, as its delegates to the General Convention, the delegates appointed for that purpose by the several societies constituting the Association, with power to fill vacancies.

On the passage of this resolution, the ayes and nays were called for, with the following result: —

Yeas. — Messrs. Wilks, Benade, Beaman, Snyder, Warren, Keffer, Hays, Glenn, Ferrett, Tafel, Jackson, Hallowell, Swope, — 13.

Nays. — Messrs. Seddon, Starkey, Lever, Whittington, Archer, Close, Kent, Roberts, — 8.

20. On motion of J. C. Keffer, it was voted that the next meeting of the Association be held at Upper Darby, on the last Thursday of August.

21. The President appointed Rev. Mr. Benade to preach at the next meeting of the Association.

22. The following Committees were appointed for the ensuing year: —

Ministers. — Rev. Messrs. Seddon, Wilks, Benade, and Beaman.

Laymen. — Messrs. Snyder, Lever, Roberts, Glenn, and Oram.

Missionary. — Messrs. Seddon, Wilks, Benade, Beaman, Shankland, Keffer, and Lever.

Correspondence. — Messrs. Roberts, Keffer, and Tafel.

Moral and Religious Instruction. — Messrs. Kent, Roberts, Lever, and Dr. Starkey.

Books and Tracts. — Messrs. Wilks, Keffer, J. W. Lever, and Close.

23. The 118th Selection from the New Book of Worship was chanted, the benediction given by the President, and the Association adjourned.

WM. ROBERTS, *Secretary.*

Report of the Philadelphia Second Society.

During the period which has elapsed since our last meeting, we have but little to report. Our meetings for public worship have been held every sabbath morning, with one exception, when our reader was unable to attend. Rev. Mr. Brickman preached for us once. Rev. Mr. Seddon preached, and administered the most holy ordinance of the Lord's Supper for us, twice, and baptized two infants; and Mr. Beaman has preached seven times at evening service, and officiated at a funeral.

The Sunday school is held in the Temple every sabbath afternoon, and is attended by twenty pupils and four teachers.

We send five dollars for the uses of the Association.

WM. ROBERTS, *for the Delegates.*

Report of the Third New-Jerusalem Society of Philadelphia.

FRANKFORD, April 5, 1858.

Since the last meeting of the Association, our society has still been making very cheering progress. Public worship on the sabbath has been regularly and constantly sustained, — having been conducted, a good part of the time, by Mr. Shankland, whose services have been very acceptable and useful. In his absence, Mr. Smith of Philadelphia, or some other person, has read a sermon.

Our number of members is now twenty-six; seven having joined us from the Frankford Society, and two new members that have not been connected with any society previously. The congregation in regular attendance numbers from sixty to eighty. The sabbath school also shows a corresponding degree of improvement: the number of pupils is ninety-five; in regular attendance, about seventy; and are divided into twelve classes, under the care of a superintendent, five male and seven female teachers.

One fact in relation to the school seems worthy of particular remark: it is the advancement of the children in the art of singing, so useful in the cultivation of the affections for good. Mr. Thomas B. Worrell's patience and perseverance have been, and still are, unremitting in the cause of vocal music in our society.

The sabbath-evening meetings for mutual instruction in the doctrines are still continued. It seems very desirable to witness a more general inclination to read and become better acquainted with the doctrines of the church, as a guide

in the path to eternal life. Reading them for the sake of knowing them will never answer: we must read them for the sake of living according to them.

JOSEPH M. LEVER, *Secretary.*

Report of the Delaware-County Society of the New Jerusalem to the Pennsylvania Association, April, 1858.

DEAR BRETHREN, — Since our last communication, we have continued much the same as then reported. We have held our meetings regularly, and they have been well attended.

We have had an accession of five to our number of members. The pastor has baptized six persons, — three adults and three children.

We have held social meetings for the last two months at the parsonage, and most of the members have attended them, as well as many not in membership with us; and we think they have been of great use.

Our Sunday school, which was suspended at the commencement of the winter, has been recommenced under favorable auspices.

The society sends five dollars for the use of the Association.

STACY JONES, *Secretary.*

Report of the New-Jerusalem Society of Frankford to the Pennsylvania Association.

FRANKFORD, April 5, 1858.

DEAR BRETHREN, — Several changes have occurred in our society since our last Report to you, yet our general state is not materially different.

Among these changes is the removal, by death, of Mr. Joseph Burrough, — an aged and estimable member of long standing in the society; and also of Rev. Isaac C. Worrell. The latter took an early part in the New Church in this neighborhood, and occupied a prominent position in this Association. As the officers and members of our society have already given an appropriate expression of their regard for the departed, and of sympathy with his suddenly bereaved wife and family, we need only add, that we hope, as will our brethren, that he has ere this reached those heavenly societies which our earthly ones should inwardly resemble, and that the seeds of the truths and doctrines which he has sown will bear a plentiful harvest of good and delight.

Since his decease, those of his family who were united with us — viz., Mrs. E. Worrell, Mrs. E. J. Levis, Mary S. Worrell, and Mrs. E. G. Worrell — have applied for and received a transfer to the Third New-Jerusalem Society of Philadelphia, in Frankford; as also have three others, who have attended that society a few years; viz., Mr. S. Sidebotham and wife, and Miss Alice Lever.

We have received an accession of two members, — viz., Mrs. Nancy Holt and Mr. Thaddeus Stearne. Our present number is forty, — being seven less than at last Report.

The attendance at the public services and communion, and at the Sunday school and the meetings of the society, does not vary noticeably from that reported at the last session of the Association. During the interval, our pastor has officiated at fourteen baptisms, at seven funerals, and at two marriages.

JOHN W. LEVER, *Secretary.*

Since the last meeting of the Association, besides the fulfilment of our ordinary duties in the ministry, we have officiated at two marriages, at fourteen baptisms, and at seven funerals. Of these, two persons were baptized, and one funeral was attended, in the city of Camden, N. J.

Two licenses have been issued to preach the doctrines of the church: one to Mr. John R. Shankland, on the 28th of August, 1857; and one to Prof. Edmund A. Beaman, on the 31st of October in the same year.

Respectfully submitted, JAMES SEDDON.

INTELLIGENCE AND MISCELLANY.

LETTER FROM DR. TAFEL.

TUBINGEN, March 30, 1858.

MY DEAR SIR, — Since my last, I have continued to print the third volume of my German translation of the "True Christian Religion;" the "Diary of Swedenborg," part vii. sect. 3, containing the lives of all the persons mentioned in it, together with the "Genealogy of the Family Swedenborg;" and, lastly, the "Dictionary of Correspondences" from the manuscripts.

I have good news from our friends and brethren. From Berlin I have received intelligence, by letter, that Mr. J. Young Scammon, from Chicago (who before had written me from Dresden, requesting German books), paid them a visit in February. According to this letter, the Declaration of the New Church at Manchester, together with our explanations, made a good impression: so said also the letters from Mecklenburg, Bavaria, Sweden, and Switzerland. As to Austria alone, I am anxious for reasons well known, and am desirous, to learn whether the Declaration and my letters have been received.

The ladies at Berne are very active and zealous, notwithstanding the efforts of the hells. They have converted another lady to the doctrines, — first by communicating to her the work on "Heaven and Hell," and afterwards by personal acquaintance. This lady has shown herself very thankful for the truths and consolations she found in our books. Attacks from relations were duly answered, and the answer previously communicated to the other distant members of the family. The Russian lady, also, has been attacked and persecuted from different quarters, especially by such as adhere to the doctrine of faith alone, and by their instruments; but she answered accordingly, and declared to me that she was a gainer as to her interior man.

During the present vacation, I wish to travel, for a few days, to Herisau, where I am invited; and I hope to find there a few minds open to truth and good. I have had an opportunity of purchasing a quantity of the better edition of the late Mr. Hofaker's Latin reprints of the "Four Leading Doctrines," and of the work "Concerning Conjugial Love," as well as the "Doctrina Principialis de Deo Triuno," being an extract from the "Apocalypse Explained;" of which better edition but few copies were remaining: on which account, we are interested to preserve them till a new edition can be published.

As I must be ready to depart in three hours, I am obliged here to conclude with the remark, that I feel myself much obliged for the generous assistance of Messrs. J. H. Wilkins, D. L. Webster, L. S. Burnham, and others; and I will request you to send to Mr. Wilkins the enclosed letter, which also contains letters to the above-named gentlemen.

I remain, with great esteem, yours very truly, EMANUEL TAFEL.

THE "NEW-JERUSALEM MAGAZINE."

THE present number of this magazine completes the thirtieth volume. We believe that no New-Church periodical has continued for so long a period, unless it be the "Intellectual Repository," published in London. The first number of the magazine was issued in September, 1827; and the first volume contained 384 pages. The present volume contains 600 pages, at a price much reduced from that of the original subscription.

It is expected that the next number will consist of the Journal and Proceedings of the General Convention, at its annual session, which commences in Boston on the ninth day of the present month.

OBITUARIES. — Death of Capt. Benjamin Page, and of F. J. Kramph, Esq.

We learn that Capt. Benjamin Page, of the United-States navy, died in New York, on the 17th of April last, in the sixty-fifth year of his age; and F. J. Kramph, Esq., in Lancaster, Pa., on the 18th of the same month, in his forty-eighth year. Both of these gentlemen have been long and extensively known, and highly esteemed, not only in the New Church, to which they were warmly devoted, but in the community at large.

We hope we may be able to give a more extended notice of them in a future number of this magazine.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE GENERAL CONVENTION.

TO aid in disseminating the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem, to minister to the wants of isolated and initiate receivers, and to furnish instruction suited to the states of New-churchmen and their families, the General Convention of the New Church in America has taken under its control, or established, the following series of PERIODICALS; to which the attention of all who are friendly to the New Church is respectfully solicited:—

I.

THE NEW-JERUSALEM MAGAZINE. Published monthly in Boston, Mass., at $2 per annum.

This Periodical,—now in the twenty-ninth year of its existence,—to which so many have heretofore acknowledged themselves indebted for aid, in their early efforts to comprehend the spiritual truths of the New Church, will preserve its essential character under the control of the Convention. Each number will contain an original Sermon, together with the contributions of experienced writers, in illustration of the leading truths of the Church, and such New-Church intelligence as may be deemed worthy of preservation for future use.

II.

THE NEW-CHURCH MAGAZINE FOR CHILDREN. Published monthly in Boston, Mass., at $1 per annum.

The title of this little work indicates its distinctive character. It is intended to subserve the important end of furnishing religious instruction for children. The words of the Lord — "*Suffer* little children to come unto Me" — are a plain intimation, not only of our duty to children, but of their readiness to "come unto Him" when permitted, or when he is truly presented to their minds.

III.

THE NEW-JERUSALEM MESSENGER. Published weekly in New York, at $2 per annum.

This periodical, which has now entered its second year, is intended to furnish a medium for the frequent interchange of intelligence between Newchurchmen scattered over our widely extended country, and a cheap and convenient means of dispensing a knowledge of the Doctrines, wherever an opening may occur. It is devoted to the elucidation of New-Church truths, and to intelligence from every branch of the Church, both in Europe and America. It therefore performs the uses of both a newspaper and a tract. Its aim is to sustain the interest of our brethren in things pertaining to the Holy City, and to awaken an interest in its behalf among those who are not yet acquainted with its doctrines.

SWEDENBORG'S WRITINGS.

The General Convention has also purchased the stereotype plates of the American translations of the following of Swedenborg's Works: "The True Christian Religion;" "Conjugial Love;" "Heaven and Hell." These plates, together with those of "The Liturgy, or Book of Worship," have been removed to the Convention's Publishing Depot, 215, Canal Street, New York. Editions of these works, and of such others as may be deemed useful, will accordingly be published hereafter in New York, and furnished at rates that will secure their distribution through all the avenues of trade. Orders for such works as may from time to time be announced are respectfully solicited.

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MEETINGS OF THE CONVENTION AND THE ASSOCIATIONS.

The GENERAL CONVENTION	at Boston, on Wednesday, June 9, 1858.
The ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION	Chicago, Friday, Oct. 15, 1858.
The MAINE ASSOCIATION	Bangor, Friday, Aug. 27, 1858.
The MARYLAND ASSOCIATION	Washington, Thursday, May 6, 1858.
The MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION	East Bridgewater, Thursday, Oct. 7, 1858.
The MICHIGAN AND NORTH. IND. ASSOCIATION	Friday, Oct. 15, 1858.
The PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION	Upper Darby, Thursday, Aug. 26, 1858.
GENERAL SOCIETY IN OHIO	Bellefontaine, Friday, Sept. 24, 1858.

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☞ All letters relating to business are to be directed to the Publisher, No. 3, Beacon Street. Other communications may be addressed "*To the Editor.*"

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